

For the Jews who were not vegetarians, animal sacrifice was the way to forgiveness (and of course, after the sacrifice, the animal was eaten), but for the vegetarian Jews, baptism was advocated.

Complementing the new focus on baptism were opposition to the Temple, where the animals were sacrificed, and celebration of Passover without the lamb (slaughtered sacrificially in the Temple).

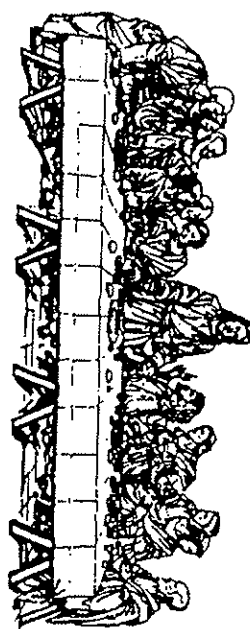
Jesus rails against the Temple, and his single act of direct confrontation with the authorities is in the Temple, the slaughterhouse of first century Palestine, when he engages in direct action by casting out all those selling animals for sacrifice. We can debate his reasons, but the practical effect was a Jew preventing others Jews from engaging in the Passover slaughter they felt was called for by God. Clearly, Jesus rejects this notion, claiming twice that they should all learn the meaning of Hosea when he says, speaking for God, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." And in fact, there are no scriptures in which Jesus eats lamb, which he would surely have eaten at Passover, had he not been a vegetarian. We see Jesus eating on the Passover exactly twice, and neither time is lamb involved. The nonvegetarians ate lamb at the Passover, but the vegetarians ate only unleavened bread as, it seems, did Jesus.

One final point to make is that many Christians of the first three centuries, including all of the "Desert Fathers," were vegetarians and that they continued to celebrate the Passover with bread and wine, not lamb's flesh. It would be strange indeed for the first Christians to have adopted a diet not followed by Jesus himself.

Indeed, we have eloquent writings from many of the early Church leaders who say that, to quote St. Jerome, "Jesus Christ, who appeared when the time had been fulfilled, has again joined the end with the beginning, so that it is no longer allowed for us to eat animal meat."

More than 8 billion animals are slaughtered each year for food in this country. Because of intensive farming practices, each lives in utter misery. This is surely the greatest denial of God in human history. As St. John Chrysostom said in describing the early Christians, "No streams of blood are among them; no butchering and cutting of flesh. With their repast of fruits and vegetables even angels from heaven, as they behold it, are delighted and pleased."

"The stream of meat darkens the light of the spirit," proclaimed St. Basil. Won't you encourage vegetarianism in your diocese?



Jesus was a vegetarian.

In Jesus' day, preaching baptism for forgiveness of sins in place of animal sacrifice placed one clearly among the vegetarian sects of Judaism who were attempting to usher in the new age of Isaiah 11. It would not have been lost on anyone in first century Palestine that John, who came to "prepare a way for the lord," was baptizing people, not sacrificing animals. Isaiah 11, of course, declares that God's will is for compassion, for an age when even the lion lies down with the lamb, and there is no bloodshed at all.

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Why should Christians be vegetarians?

Jesus' message is one of love and compassion, yet there is nothing loving or compassionate about factory farms and slaughterhouses, where billions of animals live miserable lives and die violent, bloody deaths. Jesus mandates kindness, mercy, compassion, and love for all God's creation. He would be appalled by the degree of suffering we inflict on animals to indulge our acquired taste for their flesh.

Christians have a choice. When we sit down to eat, we can add to the level of violence, misery, and death in the world, or we can respect His creation with a vegetarian diet.

Was Jesus a vegetarian? JESUS WAS NOT A BUTCHER; HE WAS THE PRINCE OF PEACE

The Garden of Eden, God's perfect world, was vegetarian (Gen. 1:29-30). Immediately, God calls this ideal and non-exploitative relationship "good" (Gen. 1:31). There follow many years of fallen humanity, when people held slaves, waged war, ate animals and committed various other violent acts. But the prophets tell us that the peaceable kingdom will be nonviolent and vegetarian; even the lion will lie down with the lamb (e.g., Isaiah 11). Jesus is the Prince of Peace, who ushers in this new age of nonviolence. When Christians pray, "Your will be done, on Earth as it is in heaven," the one prayer given to us by Jesus, this obligates us to change our lives, to make choices that are as merciful and loving as possible. There will be no factory farms and slaughterhouses in heaven.

God created every animal with the capacity for pain and suffering. But on today's factory farms, animals are dehorned, debeaked, and castrated without anesthesia. To maximize profits, they are crowded together in the least space possible, and are genetically bred, so that most suffer lameness, crippling leg deformities, or bone breaks, because their legs can't keep up with their scientifically enhanced bodies. Finally, they are trucked without food or water, through all weather extremes, to a frightening and hellish death.

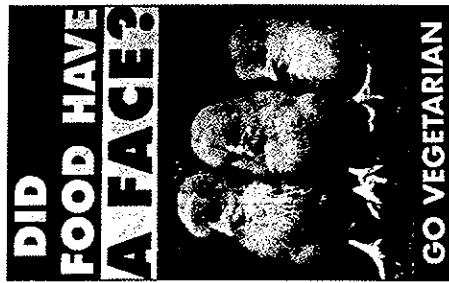
Compassion and respect for all who suffer

A vegetarian diet is good for your health and spares animals unimaginable suffering and violence. Remember: As we do to the least, so we do to Him.

Show respect for God's creatures--go vegetarian!



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As we know, on the sixth day, God created human beings and animals, and in Genesis 1:28, God calls for human stewardship of animals, immediately afterward commanding a vegetarian diet ("I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food"). God's eternal law, given to human beings in Genesis and reiterated by Jesus, is the law of love and compassion: "Be merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful."



Not to hurt our humble brethren is our first duty to them, but to stop there is not enough. We have a higher mission--to be of service to them wherever they require it.

Francis of Assisi

It's a matter of taking the side of the weak against the strong, something the best people have always done.

Harriet Beecher Stowe

It is necessary and urgent that following the example of the poor man (St Francis) one decides to abandon inconsiderate forms of domination, capture and custody with respect to all creatures.

POPE JOHN PAUL II

"Animals are God's creatures, not human property, nor utilities, nor resources, nor commodities, but precious beings in God's sight. ... Christians whose eyes are fixed on the awfulness of crucifixion are in a special position to understand the awfulness of innocent suffering. The Cross of Christ is God's absolute identification with the weak, the powerless, and the vulnerable, but most of all with unprotected, undefended, innocent suffering."



The Jewish Roots of Christian Vegetarianism

Most Christians today neglect a fundamental truth of their faith, the elemental idea and ideal of vegetarianism. Vegetarianism played a central role in the life and worship of Jewish-Christians until their demise under Constantine. Genesis 1:29-30 affirms that God's original, unchanging will was for humans and all animals to have a vegetarian diet. The belief in an original paradisaical state of inter-species harmony is an archetype reflected in myths of many cultures. Genesis 9:3-4 has been interpreted by some as a concession by God permitting humans to eat meat so long as the blood is drained from it. But for Jewish-Christians this passage affirmed that meat was strictly forbidden by God since it is not possible to remove all the blood from any animal. They also used Numbers 11:31-34 as proof that God wills for us to be vegetarian. In that passage God wrathfully kills the lustful Israelites who eat the flesh of quails.

But it is in the person and teachings of Jesus that Jewish-Christians found the strongest evidence for the moral imperative of vegetarianism. It must be noted that the Jewish-Christian community in first century Jerusalem consisted of Jesus's actual blood relatives and their bishop was James the Just, brother of the Lord. They ardently sought to be orthodox pupils of Jesus, ever faithful to his teachings. This community believed that Jesus, as well as Moses and the Jewish patriarchs, had all been vegetarians. While some argue that this was a rewriting of actual history, none can deny that the historical record indicates that vegetarianism was required in the Jewish-Christianity community and that James the Just was not only a vegetarian, but raised as one.

Jesus, like so many prophets before him, condemned animal sacrifice. Jewish-Christians maintained that the original Sinai legislation was non-cultic and that the post-Deuteronomic Priestly Code which permitted animal sacrifice was a later development and a corruption of the Torah, changing the character

of Jewish religion from non-cultic to cultic. Jesus' mission, in their view, was to abolish these sacrificial laws, while affirming the rest of Mosaic law. Unlike Pauline Christians, they rejected the belief that Jesus' crucifixion was a form of atoning sacrifice. For them it was not a bloody sacrifice that brought atonement, but the water of baptism. Because Jesus abolished animal sacrifice at the Jerusalem Temple, so too is animal sacrifice to be abolished in the macro-cosm of the universe and the micro-cosm of the individual, for the Temple itself was designed as a symbolic replica of the universe and every person's body is itself a temple of the Holy Spirit. As we approach the Great Jubilee we are called to become bridges to the Last Day, which is the First Day, and to fully respond to the call of Jesus, who reveals an ancient eternal truth about the will of God: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice" (Matt 9:13 & 12:7).

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Vegetarianism As A Religious Archetype

"Whoever is merciful to all creatures is a descendant of our ancestor Abraham." (Talmud, Bezoh 32b)

Judaism's Revelations and Prophecies:

Genesis 1:29-31 reveals that vegetarianism is God's original unchanging ideal for both humans and animals [God also said, "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; and to all animals of the land, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the ground, I give all the green plants for food." And so it happened. God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.] Not until after the Great Flood, brought about as judgement against the violence in the world, did God, as a temporary concession to human weakness (and presumably because of the unavailability of sufficient plant nourishment) reluctantly give humans permission to partake of animal flesh, but not blood. Interestingly, it is after meat consumption begins that the first reference to sickness appears in the Bible. Tradition and Scripture connects meat consumption with uncontrolled lust, and in fact non-sacrificial meat is actually called b'sar ta'avah (meat of lust). The universal return to the ideal of vegetarianism was prophecised in Hosea 2:18 [I will make a covenant for them on that day with the beasts of the field, with the birds of the air, and with the things that crawl on the ground. Bow and sword and war I will destroy from the land, and I will let them take their rest in security.] and Isaiah 11: 6-9, in which all species live together peacefully and "There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain."

"I require mercy, not sacrifice." (Matthew 9:13 & 12:7)

Jesus Christ Vegetarian:

Evidence suggests beyond a reasonable doubt that Jesus of Nazareth was an Essene. The Essenes were a Jewish sect which preached against the corruption of the Jewish Temple and believed in building a Temple of the Spirit. They condemned animal sacrifice and shunned the trappings of wealth, holding everything in common and practicing forgiveness of sins through baptismal rituals and communal meals. They wore long white robes and grew their hair long. Could the similarity between these unique Essence characteristics and the Biblical description of the person and ministry of Jesus be more striking?

The origin of two of the seven Christian sacraments can be historically traced to the practices of Essences, who were strict vegetarians. That Jesus himself would have been a vegetarian is also borne out by what we know concerning the earliest Christians, the Jewish-Christian community in Jerusalem. Hegisuppus is not alone in recording that their first bishop, the brother of Jesus, James the Just, was not only a vegetarian, but that he was raised as one by his family! If Jesus is truly the Messiah and Prince of Peace predicted by the prophets of Israel, he must necessarily represent the Jewish prophetic vision of vegetarianism. It is undisputed that the two main sects among the first Jewish-Christians, the Nazoreans and the Ebionites, which were composed of many of Jesus' blood relatives, required vegetarianism as a central tenet of their Christian faith. They understood that Christ's sacrifice on the cross meant the abolition of all animal sacrifice, including the sacrifice of animals for their meat. In fact, even among Gentile-Christians, up until the age of Constantine, vegetarianism was widely practiced. The leaders of two of the three schools of the Old Catholic Age, Athanasius, Clement and Origen of the School of Alexandria and Tertullian of the School of North Africa were vegetarians. And the writings of Irenaeus, the leader of the third school, the School of Asia Minor, assert that the promised new creation is the transformation of this actual earth and includes all created orders, animal as well as human, thus providing an essential foundation for Christian animal liberation theology. The first great Christian monastic orders of both the east and west, the Order of St. Basil and the Order of St. Benedict, required vegetarianism as part of their rule of life. Mercy is the essence of Jesus Christ's message: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36). As the Father's mercy extends towards animals, so must ours: "The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made." (Psalm 145:9)

"How can any faithful follower of the Buddha kill sentient life and eat the flesh?" (Buddha)

Buddhism = Compassion:

Buddha himself states that "[t]he practice of religion involves, as the first principle, a loving compassionate heart for all creatures." In his Sermon on Loving Kind Compassion he taught his followers: "Be of a compassionate mind to all living beings and extend Loving Kindness thus: May all living creatures and beings...be freed from sorrow! Be freed from suffering! and be happiness full!" Buddhists must not hate or kill any living creature even in thought, nor are they permitted to provide others with anything which may cause harm to other life forms. The Buddha ordered his followers to refrain from traveling during the rainy season so as to avoid crushing and harming plants, insects, and other beings. A bhikkhu [monk]...", Buddha proclaimed, "ought not intentionally destroy the life of any being down to a worm or ant." Paralleling Hindu law, the Buddhist verses of the law, the Dhamma-pada, affirms, "Whoever in seeking his own happiness inflicts pain on beings which also seek happiness, he shall find no happiness after death." The ideal of compassion is so strongly emphasized in Mahayana tradition of Buddhism that Bohisattvas take vows not to personally enter Nirvana until every other life form can enter with them, thus remaining in the world as helpers leading all sentient beings towards universal enlightenment.

"All that breathes is precious. Who is to say that the suffering of a sparrow is less worthy of solace than the pain of a man? The spark of life is no dimmer simply because it is encased in fur or leather." (Dr. R.K. Punshi)

Jainism - Ahimsa's Extremists:

Mahavira, founder of Jainism, would only eat leftover food prepared for someone else so as to avoid being held accountable for taking the life of even a plant. He carried a cloth to strain out any living beings from his food and to hold over his face to avoid accidentally inhaling insects. When outside he would always examine and clear the ground to avoid crushing sentient life forms. In the end he starved himself to death to avoid causing even the smallest incidental harm to others which having a body entails. Today, many Jain follow his example by wearing facemasks and carrying brooms. Even lay Jains take vows against meat eating and against consciously taking the life of any sentient being.

"To the western religious precept, 'Love thy neighbor,' Hinduism adds, 'and every living creature is thy neighbor'." (Prof. S.S. Rama Rao Pappu)

Hinduism - The Oldest Living Tradition of Vegetarianism:

Vegetarianism has been practiced in Hinduism since about one thousand years before the time of Christ. Three of the central tenets of Hinduism (as well as Buddhism and Jainism) which compels kindness to animals are the doctrines of reincarnation, karma, and ahimsa, or non-harm to living beings. Because of the great diversity in beliefs and practices among Hindus, not all conform to the vegetarian ideal, but a thorough examination of the tradition leaves no doubt that the condemnation of meat-eating has been complete and unequivocal. Followers of the teachings of Krishna and practitioners of yoga are the strictest vegetarians within Hinduism. The first law book of India, compiled by Hindu priests around 200 B.C.E., known as the Code of Manu states that "he who injures innocuous beings from a wish to give himself pleasure, never finds happiness, neither living nor dead", whereas "he who does not willingly cause the pain of confinement and death to living beings, but desires the good of all, obtains endless bliss. He who injures no creatures obtains without effort what he thinks of, what he strives for, and what he fixes his mind on." The classic Raja Yoga text of Patanjali states the "He who permits [the killing of an animal], he who cuts it up, he who kills it, he who buys or sells [the meat], he who cooks it, he who serves it up, and he who eats it, [all should be considered as] slayers. Meat can never be obtained without injury to living creatures, and injury to sentient beings is detrimental to [attaining] heavenly bliss; let him therefore shun meat. Having well considered the [disgusting] origin of flesh and the [cruelty of] fettering and slaying corporeal beings, let him entirely abstain from eating flesh."

"In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful" (Koran)

Vegetarianism in Islam and its Offshoots:

Although Mohammed permitted the killing of animals for food if they were slaughtered in accordance with Islamic laws intended to ensure that the animals suffered as little as possible, modern Islamic scholars such as Al-Hafiz Basheer Ahmad Masri assert that modern factory farming methods of animal production are a violation of Islamic precepts. He states, "In cases where farm animals are reared under inhumane conditions, there are numerous analogous precepts in the Islamic Law forbidding such kinds of cruelty and declaring the flesh of such animals as unlawful to eat. Even the battery hens and their eggs...even trading in them or their by-products would be unlawful." Certain passages of the Koran would seem to be very persuasive arguments against meat consumption, including the following: "There is a meritorious regard for every act of charity and kindness to every living creature. - A good deed done to an animal is as a good deed done to a human being, while an act of cruelty to an animal is as bad as an act of cruelty to a human being. - He who takes pity on even a sparrow and spares his life, God will be merciful to him on the Day of Judgement. - There is no man who kills even a sparrow, or anything smaller, without a justifiable cause, but God will question him about it." The Hadith, or Islamic tradition, expresses similar views: "[E]veryone who shows clemency, even towards a mere bird under the knife, will find God's clemency towards him on Doomsday."

Sikhism emerged as a separate religion from the mixture of both Hindu and Islamic tradition. While not all Sikh sects require vegetarianism, according to Sikh scholar Swaran Singh Sanahi, "Sikh scriptures support vegetarianism fully," and Guru Nanak, the religion's founder, "considered meat eating improper." The Namdhari sect and the 3HO Golden Temple Movement are among the leading advocates of vegetarianism among Sikhs.

The Baha'i religion began as an offshoot of Shiite Islam, but has become an independent religion. It's founder Baha'u'llah, called for humans to "show kindness to animals" and to not even look upon "the creatures of God except with the eye of kindness and mercy, for Our loving providence hath pervaded all created things." His eldest son and successor Abdu'l-Baha taught that "the Lord of all mankind hath fashioned this human realm to be a Garden of Eden, an earthly paradise." Although the Baha'i faith does not strictly forbid meat eating, unmerciful diets are strongly discouraged, as such Baha'i writings as the following confirm: "Regarding the eating of animal flesh and abstinence therefrom... he [man] is not in need of meat, nor is he obliged to meat it. Even without eating meat he would live with the utmost vigor and energy.... Truly, the killing of animals and the eating of their meat is somewhat contrary to pity and compassion, and if one can content oneself with cereals, fruit, oil and nuts...it would undoubtedly be better and more pleasing."

Vegetarianism Among the Twelve

Peter:

I [Peter] live on bread alone, with olives, and seldom even with pot-herbs; and my dress is what you see, a tunic with a pallium: and having these, I require nothing more.

(Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions)

[Peter taught:] The unnatural eating of flesh meats is as polluting as the heathern worship of devils, with its sacrifices and its impure feasts; through participation in it a person becomes a fellow eater with devils. (Pseudo-Clementine Homilies)

James the Less (brother of Jesus):

[Administration of] the church passed to James, the brother of the Lord, along with the apostles. He was called "the Just" by everyone from the Lord's time to ours, since there were many Jameses, but this one was consecrated from his mother's womb. He drank no wine or liquor and ate no meat. No razor came near his head, nor did he anoint himself with oil, and took no baths. He alone was permitted to enter the sanctum, for he wore not wool, but linen. (Hegesippus, Memoirs)

John:

[Epiphanius] admits John never entered any bathhouses and followed the virgin/vegetarian lifestyle of James absolutely! (Eisenman, James the Brother of Jesus; referring to Epiphanius' Against Heresies)

Matthew:

[T]hose who bend around inflammatory tables, nourishing their own diseases, are ruled by a most lickerish demon, whom I shall not blush to call Belly-demon, and the worst and most abandoned of all demons. It is far better to be happy than to have your body act as graveyards for animals. Accordingly, the apostle Matthew partook of seeds, nuts and vegetables, without flesh. (Clement of Alexandria)

Simon the Zealot (brother of Jesus):

Judas, called Maccabaeus, however, with about nine others, withdrew into the wilderness and lived like wild animals in the hills with his companions, eating nothing but wild plants to avoid contracting defilement. [2 Mac. 5:27] . . . [T]his statement just about says everything where these wilderness-dwelling 'Zealots' were concerned. . . (Eisenman, James the Brother of Jesus)

[T]hose [Jews] following the extreme purity commandments [i.e. Nazirites, Zealots, Essenes, Ebionites, etc.] -- particularly when Temple sacrifice was interrupted by individuals of questionable purity who were not true Sons of Zadok -- had some question about whether or not it was permissible to consume meat. (Eisenman, James the Brother of Jesus)

Thaddaeus (brother of Jesus):

According to Epiphanius it was not just James, but all of 'Joseph's sons who revered virginity and followed the Nazirite life-style'. (Against Heresies)

Thomas:

The St. Thomas Christians of Kerala India, who trace their origins back to the missionary journey of the apostle Thomas to India, have practiced Christian vegetarianism since their foundation.

Judas Iscariot:

If he was a historical person, Judas was probably a member of the Sicarii (note the relation between the words Iscariot and Sicarios), the most extremist branch of the Zealot Movement, and therefore likely a vegetarian for purity reasons.

Andrew:

[I]n Greek 'Andrew' means 'Man' -- a variation of 'the First Man' or 'Primal Adam' ideology. . .? (Eisenman, James the Brother of Jesus) which was central to the theology of all the various daily bathing vegetarian sects of the early centuries CE.

[B]oth Didymus Thomas (Twin Twin) and Judas Iscariot are probably connected in some manner with the members of Jesus' family (Eisenman, James the Brother of Jesus).



The Allegory of Mosaic Dietary Law

The dietary regulations found in Chapter 11 of the Book of Leviticus were, according to Jewish philosophers such as Philo of Alexandria and Maimonides, as well as early Christians, originally intended to be understood as spiritual guidelines which will lead to the self-disciplining of one's appetites. Beyond the literal level reading, the true wisdom of these regulations becomes evident when they are read as allegorical roadmaps to virtuous living. Philo, for example, claims that in forbidding pork Moses is teaching self-denial, as pork was considered the most delicious of meats. By forbidding the eating of the flesh-eating animals and birds Moses teaches that we should be gentle and kind. The eating of cud-chewing animals is permitted since chewing over and over again what one has learned will help one to grow in wisdom. Eating cloven-footed animals is permitted because the divided hoof symbolizes sure-footed discernment and a developed ability to conceive, distinguish and choose between opposing/complimentary ideas. For the Jews and Christians already following God's original vegetarian dietary law as found in Genesis 1:29-31, these restrictions would be superfluous if interpreted literally. But understood as analogy, these food regulations provide spiritual teaching for righteous daily living. Chapter 9 of the General Epistle of Barnabas provides traditional interpretations of these Levitical dietary rules. Barnabas was a traveling companion and fellow preacher with Paul. We know that this Epistle was read throughout the Catholic churches of Alexandria and it is cited by many early Church fathers, including Origen and Jerome (who considered it both genuine and canonical), as well as Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius. Some claim, however, that another anonymous author penned this letter. It was written, claims Coterlerius, for the benefit of Ebionites, the vegetarian Jewish-Christian community. The date of it's composition is estimated to be prior to 90-100 AD.

Drawing on earlier Christian, Jewish, and gnostic traditions, this epistle's author writes "[t]hat the commands of Moses concerning clean and unclean beasts were all designed for a spiritual signification."

"But why did Moses say Ye shall not eat of the swine, neither the eagle nor the hawk; nor the crow; nor any fish that has not a scale upon him? -- answer, that in the spiritual sense, he comprehended three doctrines, that were to be gathered from thence.

Besides which he says to them in the book of Deuteronomy, And I will give my statutes unto this people. Wherefore it is not the command of God that they should not eat these things; but Moses in the spirit spake unto them.

Now the sow he forbade them to eat; meaning thus much; thou shalt not join thyself to such persons as are like unto swine; who whilst they live in pleasure, forget their God; but when any want pinches them, then they know the Lord; as the sow when she is full knows not her master; but when she is hungry she makes a noise; and being again fed, is silent.

Neither, says he, shalt thou eat the eagle, nor the hawk, nor the kite, nor the crow; that is thou shalt not keep company with such kind of men as know not how by their labour and sweat to get themselves food: but injuriously ravish away the things of others; and watch how to lay snares for them; when at the same time they appear to live in perfect innocence.

So these birds alone seek not food for themselves, but sitting idle seek how they may eat of the flesh others have provided; being destructive through their wickedness.

Neither, says he, shalt thou eat the lamprey, nor the polypus, nor the cuttle-fish; that is, thou shalt not be like such men, by using to converse with them; who are altogether wicked and adjudged to death. For so those fishes are alone accursed, and wallow in the mire, nor swim as other fishes, but tumble in the dirt at the bottom of the deep.

The Epistle to the Omnivores

God created humanity in his image. . . saying: Be creative and multiply; replenish the earth". -- Gen. 1:27-28

God also said: "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food". -- Gen. 1:29

"[E]at of the plants of the field". -- Gen. 3:18

God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them: "Be creative and multiply and replenish the earth. . . Only flesh with its life-blood still in it you shall not eat". -- Gen. 9:1,4

Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. Each day the people are to go out and gather their daily portion; thus will I test them, to see whether they follow my instructions or not". -- Ex. 16:4

The Israelites called this food manna. It was like coriander seed, but white, and it tasted like wafers made with honey. -- Ex. 16:31

"You shall not kill". -- Ex. 20:13

This shall be an everlasting ordinance for them and their descendants. "Tell them, therefore. . . if anyone, whether of the house of Israel or of the aliens residing among them, partakes of **any** blood, I will set myself against that one who partakes of blood and will cut him off from among his people". -- Lev. 17:7-10

"No one among you, not even a resident alien, may partake of blood". -- Lev. 17:12

"Since the life of every living body is its blood, anyone who partakes of it shall be cut off". -- Lev. 17:12

All that day, all night, and all the next day the people gathered in the quail. . . But while the meat was still between their teeth, **before** it could be consumed, the Lord's wrath flared up against the people, and he struck them with a very great plague. So that place was named Kibroth-hattaavah, because it was there that the greedy people were buried. -- Num. 11:32-34.

I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the Lord, your God, heeding his voice, and holding fast to him. -- Deut. 30:19

[A]ll living creatures you sustain, Lord. -- Ps. 36:7

The just man takes care of his beast, but the heart of the wicked is merciless. -- Prov. 12:10

Be not among winebibbers, or among gluttonous eaters of meat. -- Prov. 23:20

Listen to the instruction of our God. . . I have had enough of whole-burnt rams and fat of fatlings; In the blood of calves, lambs and goats I find no pleasure. . . When you spread out your hands, I close my eyes to you; Though you pray the more, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood! Wash yourself clean! Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes; cease doing evil; learn to do good. Make justice your aim. -- Is. 1:10-17

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey he shall eat, **that he may know** to refuse evil, and choose the good. -- Is. 7:14-15

Thus says the Lord. . . "He who slaughters an ox is like him who kills a man; he who sacrifices a lamb, like him who breaks a dog's neck". -- Is. 66:1,3

For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. -- Hos. 6:6

But he adds, neither shalt thou eat of the hare. To what end?--To signify this to us; Thou shalt not be an adulterer; nor liken thyself to such persons. For the hare every year multiplies the places of its conception; and so many years as it lives, so many it has.

Neither shalt thou eat of the hyena; that is, again, be not an adulterer, nor a corrupter of others; neither be like to such. And whereforeso?--Because that creature every year changes its kind, and is sometimes male and sometimes female.

For which cause also he justly halted the weasel; to the end that they should not be like such persons who with their mouths commit wickedness by reason of their uncleanness; nor join themselves with those impure women, who with their mouths commit wickedness. Because that animal conceives with its mouth.

Moses, therefore, speaking as concerning meats, delivered indeed three great precepts to them in the spiritual signification of those commands. But they according to the desires of the flesh, understood him as if he had only meant it of meats.

And therefore David took aright the knowledge of his threefold command, saying in like manner.

Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly; as the fishes before mentioned in the bottom of the deep in darkness.

Nor stood in the way of sinners, as they who seem to fear the Lord, but yet sin, as the sow.

And both not sat in the seat of the scorers; as those birds who sit and watch that they may devour.

Here you have the law concerning meat perfectly set forth, and according to the true knowledge of it.

But, says Moses, ye shall eat all that divideth the hoof, and cheweth the cud. Signifying thereby such a one as having taken his food, knows him that nourisheth him; and resting upon him, rejoiceth in him.

And in this he spake well, having respect to the commandment. What, therefore, is it that he says?--That we should hold fast to them that fear the Lord; with those who meditate on the command of the word which they have received in their heart; with those that declare the righteous judgements of the Lord, and keep his commandments.

In short, with those who know that to meditate is a work of pleasure, and therefore exercise themselves in the word of the Lord.

But why might they eat those that clave the hoof?--Because the righteous liveth in this present world; but his expectation is fixed upon the other. See, brethren, how admirably Moses commanded these things.

But how should we thus know all this, and understand it? We, therefore, understanding aright the commandments, speak as the Lord would have us. Wherefore he has circumcised our ears and our hearts, that we might know these things."

The Utopians have imposed the whole activity of hunting as unworthy of free men ... The Utopians feel that slughtering our fellow creatures gradually destroys the sense of compassion which is the finest sentiment of which our nature is capable.
-- St. Thomas More

But those who bend around inflammatory tables, nourishing their own diseases, are ruled by a most lickerish demon, whom I shall not blush to call Belly-demon, and the worst and most abandoned of all demons. It is far better to be happy than to have your bodies act as graveyards for animals. Accordingly, the apostle Matthew partook of seeds, nuts and vegetables, without flesh.
-- St. Clement of Alexandria

I believe that animal sacrifices were invented by men to be a pretext for eating flesh.... If any righteous person does not burden his soul by the eating of flesh, she has the advantage of a rational motive. -- St. Clement of Alexandria

Let a person fear, above all, me, his God, and so much the gentler will he become towards my creatures and animals, on whom, on account of me, their Creator, he ought to have compassion. -- St. Bridget of Sweden

Now that there are souls in all living things, even those in the waters, is, I suppose, doubted by no one. -- Origin

St. Hubert's attribute is a stag with a crucifix between its antlers. According to legend, the saint was a hunter but gave up his violent ways when he suddenly saw Christ in a stag he was about to shoot. -- Br. David Steindl-Rast, OSB

[W]hen she [Margery Kempe] saw a crucifix, or if she saw a man had a wound, or a beast, or if a man beat a child before her, or smote a horse or another beast with a whip, she thought she saw Our Lord beaten and wounded. -- Rev. Ambrose Agius

Molua MacOcha has died, and therefore all living creatures bewail him, for never has he killed any animal, little or big. -- a talking bird upon the death of St. Molua MacOcha

What is a charitable heart? It is a heart which is burning with love for the whole creation, for humans, for the birds, for the beasts ... for all creatures. One who has such a heart cannot see or call to mind a creature without his eyes being filled with tears by reason of the immense compassion which seizes his heart; a heart which is softened and can no longer bear to see or learn from others of any suffering, even the smallest pain being inflicted upon a creature. That is why such a person never ceases to pray for the animals ... moved by the infinite pity which reigns in the hearts of those who are becoming united with God. -- St. Isaac the Syrian

ANIMAL LIBERATION: A SAINTLY TRADITION

Not to hurt our humble brethren is our first duty to them, but to stop there is a complete misapprehension of the intentions of Providence. We have a higher mission. God wishes that we should succor them whenever they require it. -- St. Francis of Assisi

St. Francis is not alone in his concern for "brother and sister" creatures -- as he called them. The lives of more than two-thirds of canonized saints -- east and west -- demonstrate a practical concern for, and befriending of, animals, which was often in sharp contrast to the conventional view of their contemporaries. -- Rev. Andrew Linzey

The Saints are exceedingly loving and gentle to humankind, and even to brute beasts... Surely we ought to show them great kindness and gentleness for many reasons, but, above all, because they are of the same origin as ourselves. -- St. John Chrysostom

[T]he unnatural eating of flesh-meat is polluting ...
[F]lesh meat and wine serve as material for sensuality, and are a source of danger, sorrow, and disease. --St. John Chrysostom

The unnatural eating of flesh meats is as polluting as the heathen worship of devils, with its sacrifices and its impure feasts, through participation in it a man becomes a fellow eater with devils. -- St. Peter in the Clementine Homilies

For to you [gluttons] your belly is god, and your lungs a temple, but your paunch a sacrificial altar. -- Tertullian

The eating of animal meat was unknown up to the big flood, but since the flood they have pushed the strings and strinking juices of animal meat into our mouths, just as they threw quails in front of the grumbling sensual people in the desert.
-- Christian Hieronymous, early Church father

Jesus Christ, who appeared when the time had been fulfilled, has again joined the end with the beginning, so that it is no longer allowed for us to eat animal meat. -- St. Jerome

He [St. James the Just, brother of Jesus and 1st Christian Bishop] was holy from his mother's womb; he drank no wine or strong drink, nor did he eat meat; no razor touched his head, nor did he anoint himself with oil. -- Hegesippus

The stream of meat darkens the light of the spirit....
With sober living well-being increases in the household, animals are in safety, there is no shedding of blood, nor putting animals to death. The knife of the cook is needless, for the table is spread only with the fruits that Nature gives, and with them they are content. -- St. Basil the Great

For cruelty to defenseless beings we shall one day have to answer before him who trieth the heart and the reins. Not with impunity is the weakness of animals abused. -- Rev. Jean Gautier, doctor of canon law and director of St. Sulpice Seminary

A man is not likely to be much of a Christian if he is not kind to animals. -- Fr. John Bligh, SJ

It is a moral obligation for every Christian to fight cruelty to animals because the consequences of cruelty are destructive of the Christian order... The duty of all Christians [is] to emulate God's attributes, especially that of mercy, in regard to animals. To be kind to animals, is to imitate the loving kindness of God. -- Very Rev. Ambrose Agius

I am sure that if people could observe what goes on in the vivisection laboratories the vivisectors would be lynched. -- Fr. J. Ude

Be thou to them, O Lord, the defender of their life and the restorer of their health. -- from The Rituale Romanum's benediction for sick animals

Lord God Almighty, who didst well that they only-begotten Son, Our Redeemer, should be born in a stable, and lie in a manger between the animals; bless, we pray thee, this stable. . . that for horses, cattle, and other living creatures it may be a wholesome place and safe from all aggression. -- Bededictio Stabuli Equorum, Boum, et aliorum Armentorum

The Earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. O God, enlarge within us the sense of fellowshiip with all living things, our brothers the animals to whom thou has given the earth as their home in common with us. We remember the shame that in the past we have exercised the high dominion of man with ruthless cruelty, so that the voice of the earth, which should have gone up to thee in song, has been a groan of travail. May we realize that they live, not for us alone, but for themselves and for thee, and that they have the sweetness of life. -- liturgy of St. Basil the Great

THE CHURCH SPEAKS OUT AGAINST ANIMAL CRUELTY

It is necessary and urgent that following the example of the poor man (St. Francis) one decides to abandon inconsiderate forms of domination, capture and custody with respect to all creatures. -- Pope John Paul II

[W]e are facing an enormous and dramatic clash between good and evil, death and life, the "culture of death" and the "culture of life". We find ourselves not only "faced with" but necessarily "in the midst of" this conflict: we are all involved and we all share in it, with the inescapable responsibility of choosing to be unconditionally pro-life... To defend and promote life, to show reverence and love for it, is a task which God entrusts to every person.... -- Pope John Paul II

The taking of life presents itself as a moral problem all along the spectrum of life. -- Joseph Cardinal Bernardin

[W]hatever treatment we give to lesser creatures is a reflection on the state of our soul in relation to their Creator. -- Cardinal Rafael Santos

We owe ourselves the duty not to be brutal or cruel; and we owe to God the duty of treating all His creatures according to His own perfections of love and mercy. -- Cardinal Henry Edward Manning

They have done us no harm... They have no power whatever of resistance. It is the cowardice and tyranny of which they are victims that make their suffering so especially touching. There is something so very dreadful, so Satanic, in tormenting those who have never harmed us, and cannot defend themselves, who are utterly in our power. -- Cardinal John Henry Newman on "cruelty shown to poor beasts"

Is cruelty to animals a sin? Yes, a very cowardly and disgraceful sin. -- Bishop Bellford

Why is cruelty to animals a sin? Because it performs an act that deviates from the order and purpose of the Creator. -- Cardinal Zigliara

All animals belong to God; He alone is their absolute owner. In our relations with them, we must emulate the divine attributes, the highest of which is mercy. God, their father and creator, loves them tenderly. -- Msgr. LeRoy E. McWilliams

To make them [animals] suffer for one's own pleasure is an exhibition of sadism which every moralist must denounce. -- Msgr. Ferdinando Lambruschini

And the flesh of slain beasts in his body will become his own tomb. For I tell you truly, he who kills, kills himself, and whoso eats the flesh of slain beasts, eats the body of death. -- The Essene Gospel of Peace

Ye shall eat no flesh nor take strong drink, for the child shall be consecrated unto God from his mother's womb, and neither flesh nor strong drink shall he take. -- Angel's Annunciation to Mary, in The Gospel of the Holy Twelve

Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel. He shall eat butter and honey, that he may know to refuse evil and to choose the good. -- Isa. 7:14
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I have put before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life, that you and your children may live. -- Deut. 30:19

Cruelty to animals is as if man did not love God. -- Cardinal John Henry Neuman

Thanks be to God: since I gave up flesh and wine I have been delivered from all physical ills. -- John Wesley

Plant life instead of animal food is the keystone of regeneration. Jesus used bread instead of flesh and wine in place of blood at the Lord's Supper. -- Richard Wagner

I will have mercy, and not sacrifice. -- Hosea 6:6; Matt.

Be not among the winebibbers, not among the riotous eaters of flesh! -- Prov. 23:20

He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man. -- Isa. 66:3

When you make many prayers I will hear not: your hands are full of blood. -- Isa. 1:15

I am full of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of the goats. -- Isa. 1:11

And the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine. -- Ezek. 47:12

The just man takes care of his beasts, but the heart of the wicked is merciless. -- Prov. 12:10

Thou shalt not kill. -- Ex. 20:13

(Jesus:) I have come to do away with sacrifices, and if you do not stop sacrificing, the wrath will not stop from among you...

(The Followers:) "Where do you want us to prepare things for you to eat the Pasover meal?" (Jesus;) "I certainly do not desire to eat meat with you at this Passover, do I?" -- Gospel of the Ebionites

Jesus used to say, "My seasoning is hunger, my undergarment is fear of God, my outer garment is wool, my fire in winter is the sun's rays, my lamp is the moon, my riding beast is my feet, and my food and fruit are what the earth produces. -- al-Ghazzali

[S]ince meat causes my brother to stumble [literally "scandalizes"], I will never eat meat again. -- 1 Cor. 8:9

You must not eat flesh with life in it, that is, its blood... I will demand an account from every beast and human. -- Gen. 9:4-5

I will pour out my spirit on all flesh. -- Acts 2:17; Joel 3:1

Judas, called Maccabaeus, however, with about nine others, withdrew into the wilderness and lived like wild animals in the hills with his companions, eating nothing but wild plants to avoid contracting defilement. -- 2 Mac. 5:27

Take care not to destroy God's work for the sake of something to eat. -- Rom. 14:20

And behold, I have given you every herb-bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of tree-yielding seed--to you it shall be for food. -- Gen. 1:29

How would such persons eat children, when they are not even allowed to eat the blood of irrational animals? -- Biblis circa 177 on accusations against Christians

When he [St. Francis] considered the primordial source of all things he was filled with even more abundant piety, calling all creatures no matter how small, by the name of brother or sister, because he knew they had the same source as himself. -- St. Bonaventure

Ye must be humane, to be my followers -- traditional Jesus saying recounted by St. John Crysostom

*[N]o streams of blood are among them [the ascetic Christians]; no butchering and cutting up of flesh; no dainty cookery; no heaviness of head. Nor are there horrible smells of flesh meats among them or disagreeable fumes from the kitchen... With their repast of fruits and vegetables even angels in heaven, as they behold it, are delighted and pleased. -- St. John Chrysostom

*We follow the way of wolves, the habits of tigers; or rather we are worse even than they. To them Nature has assigned that they should be thus fed, while God has honoured us with rational speech and a sense of equity. And yet we are become worse than the wild beasts. -- St. John Chrysostom

* If I ever have the opportunity to talk with the emperor, I'll beg him, for the love of God and me, to enact a special law: no one is to capture or kill our sisters the larks or do them any harm. -- St. Francis of Assisi

Give us this day our daily bread.

The preparation of vegetables, fruit, and pulse is easy, and does not require the skill of expensive cooks: our bodies are nourished by them with little trouble on our part; and, if taken in moderation, such food is easier to digest, and at less cost, because it does not stimulate the appetite, and therefore is not devoured with avidity... [W]e cannot devote ourselves to wisdom if our thoughts are running on a well-laden table, the supply of which requires an excess of work and anxiety. -- St. Jerome

[S]ince it happens that even irrational animals are sensible to pain, it is possible for the affection of pity to arise in humans with regard to the sufferings of animals. Now it is evident that if a man practices a pitiful affection for animals, he is all the more disposed to take pity in his fellow human beings. -- St. Thomas Aquinas

For nothing is more contrary to the Christian spirit than gluttony. -- St. Benedict

The Church, by setting the seal of her approval on his life [St. Francis], surely implies that his behavior to the lower animals is part and parcel of the Franciscan message to the world. -- Canon Aloysius Roche

Pope Pius made St. Francis the Patron of Catholic Action, praising him on February 25, 1939, in *La Vie Intellectuelle*, "because he has presented the spectacle of kindness towards all and goodness, and pushed to establish friendship not only with human beings but with all Creation, and that not only with his lips, but with his heart." Pope Pius also asked the citizens of Rome to celebrate the feast of St. Francis by providing a meal for whatever animals they could help. -- Lewis Regenstein

[I]t is not permissible for me to cause suffering to animals without good reason, to hurt them unnecessarily is an act of cruelty. -- 1950s French catechism for children

in 1966, the Very Reverend [Dom Ambrose] Agius set forth a methodical legal and historical basis for his arguments. He wrote of the two basic rights animals have: "ratione Creatoris," meaning animals cannot be maltreated without infringing on the rights of their Creator; and "ratione ordinis creatae," disturbing God's natural order. Asserting that "cruelty is sinful," he noted that when the Holy Office -- which is authoritative to Catholics -- was asked, "Have animals rights of any kind as against their masters or owners?" the reply was affirmative, as it was for two other questions: "Does the Holy Office hold it to be sinful to torture dumb animals? Does the Holy Office hold such sins to be degrading to the soul and disposition of the tormentor?" Therefore, he wrote, "We may insist that anyone who has dealings with animals is bound by certain moral obligations, binding under sin, to treat them according to the purpose of the Creator." -- Lewis Regenstein

St. Francis once liberated two lambs, tied up across the shoulders of a farmer, who were bleating pitifully on their way to market where they would be slaughtered. St. Francis removed worms from a busy road and put them at the roadside so that they might not be crushed under the feet of passersby.
-- Dr. Michael W. Fox

Papias, the pupil of John the Evangelist, told how John . . . related how the Lord would teach that when all creatures would use for food the products of the soil, they would become peaceable and in harmony with one another. -- Dr. U.C. Ewing

Human and beast thou savest, O Lord. -- Ps. 36:6b

Did I at all command your fathers when they came out of the land of Egypt concerning burnt-offerings of sacrifices? -- Jer. 7:22-23

Moses, therefore, speaking as concerning meats, delivered indeed three great precepts to them in the spiritual signification of those commands. But they according to the desires of the flesh, understood him as if he had only meant it of meats. And therefore David took aright the knowledge of his three-fold command, saying in like manner. Blessed is the one that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly; as the fishes... in the deep darkness. Nor stood in the way of sinners, as they who seem to fear the Lord, but yet sin, as the sow. And hath not sat in the seat of scorers; as those birds who sit and watch that they may devour. Here you have the law concerning meat perfectly set forth, and according to the true knowledge of it. -- The General Epistle of Barnabas

He [Jesus] said to them, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature." -- Mk. 16:15

I will eat no flesh while the world endureth, lest I offend my brother. -- 1 Cor. 8:13

It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.
-- Rom. 21

The argument from sentiency...

A. Any being that can suffer at the very least has a right not to be forced to suffer unnecessarily.

B. It is not necessary that we inflict suffering on animals so that we can eat, especially because eating vegetables can be very healthy.

C. Therefore, to inflict unnecessary suffering on animals so as to eat them is morally reprehensible or cruel.

TWELVE UNDERSTANDINGS CONCERNING THE ECOZOIC ERA

The Nature of the Universe

1. ***The Unity of the universe.*** The universe as a whole is an interacting community of beings inseparably related in space and time. From its beginning the universe has had a psychic-spiritual dimension. The universe is a communion of subjects not a collection of objects.
2. ***Modes of Expression.*** The universe expresses itself at all levels through communion (intimacy, interrelatedness), differentiation (diversity), and subjectivity (interiority, self-organization).
3. ***Cosmogenesis.*** The universe is a creative, emergent, evolutionary reality that has developed from the time of the primordial flaring forth, and is still developing, through a sequence of irreversible transformations.

Earth and Its Current Dilemma

4. ***Earth.*** Earth is a one time endowment in the unfolding story of the universe.
5. ***The Current Dilemma.*** The effects of human activity on Earth have become so pervasive and invasive that the survival and health of the Earth community now rest on decisions being made, and actions being taken, by humans.
6. ***Transition to the Ecozoic Era.*** There is a need to move from the current technozoic period where Earth is seen as resource for the benefit of humans, to an Ecozoic Era where the well-being of the entire Earth community is the primary concern.

Three Key Building Blocks

7. ***The New Story.*** The New Story, the narrative of the evolutionary development of the universe from the primordial flaring forth to the emergence of the Ecozoic Era, provides a unifying myth for all human cultures and a basis for common action in the realization of the Ecozoic Era.
8. ***Bioregionalism.*** Bioregionalism, care for Earth in its relatively self-sustaining geo-biological divisions, reorients human activity in developing sustainable modes of living, building inclusive human community, caring for the rights of other species, and preserving the health of the Earth on which all life depends.
9. ***Ecological Spirituality.*** Ecological spirituality, presence to the primal mystery and value of nature and to Earth as a single sacred community, provides a basis for revitalizing religious experience and healing the human psyche.

Special Contributors to the Ecozoic Era

10. ***Women, Indigenous People, Science, and Humanistic and Religious Traditions.*** The wisdom of women, indigenous people, science and classical humanistic and religious traditions will have an important role to play in redefining concepts of value, meaning and fulfillment, and in setting norms of conduct for the Ecozoic Era.
11. ***The Earth Charter.*** The Earth Charter provides a comprehensive set of values and principles for the realization of the Ecozoic Era.*

The Great Work

12. ***The Great Work.*** The epic task, or "Great Work," of our time is to bring into being the Ecozoic Era. It is a task in which everyone is involved and from which no one is exempt, and it will require change in every aspect of human society. On it the fate of the Earth depends, and in it lies the hope of the future.

* The Earth Charter may be viewed at www.earthcharter.org.

